



## To Phil, adieu with many thanks and much gratitude

Phil Canuto, the executive editor of the *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* for almost 20 years, is retiring. Known to relatively few of our authors and peer reviewers, Phil has been the invisible force behind the current print and digital face and body of *CCJM*.

Few medical journals have a persona that connects with their readers, relating in ways that lead to a bonding between reader and journal that extends beyond the content of the monthly articles. We have strived to attain such a relationship with you, our readers, and I will take the liberty of assuming we have to some extent succeeded. I devote my space this month to talking with you about Phil and his relationship with the *Journal*.

I have frequently described our journalistic mission as publishing articles for our readers—not for our authors.

Phil helped translate this concept into reality by insisting that articles be readable and understandable and always have a clearly stated “bottom-line” message.

Phil joined the *CCJM* in 1995. He came with genuine journalistic and writing skills and a conviction that medical writing for and by physicians could and should have the same clarity that provides effective information transfer in other venues. He had previously worked as a reporter and medical writer at *The Akron Beacon Journal* newspaper, and prior to that had been the public information officer for the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. He holds a master’s degree from Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

Phil incorporated basic and sound principles of writing into *CCJM*, something still not uniformly done in medical journals. He pushed for each article to tell a story and clearly communicate a message to the practicing clinician that could translate into improved patient care. Bright and experienced expert clinicians were coaxed to translate their complex topics and opinions into educational messages that were accurate, relevant, and accessible. Based on unsolicited feedback from our readers and the results of standard media industry surveys, he was right on target: clarity is not the antithesis of erudition (although not all authors have shared this perspective).

He was no publishing Luddite. Phil was the driver behind continuously upgrading our open-access *CCJM* website ([www.ccjm.org](http://www.ccjm.org))—enhancing CME options, creating apps for other media, incorporating an online manuscript-tracking system, and tracking and cataloguing patterns of reader use in order to link growth to the needs of our readers. He enabled *CCJM* to become an early routine user of plagiarism-detection software. With all of this forward positioning, he also found time to champion the electronic archiving of all 81 years of the *Journal* (which you can now freely access on the *Journal’s* website).



Phil Canuto

doi:10.3949/ccjm.80b.12013

These very tangible and significant contributions pale in comparison with his impact on the internal operations of the *Journal* and on my own maturation as editor in chief (and I speak here as well on behalf of previous physician editors). He has been a constant voice of reason, somehow able to recognize potential controversies and develop strategies to ameliorate the personal conflict while not minimizing valid intellectual differences.

A product of the publication pressures of daily newspapers, he would overlook no opportunity to remind me to move manuscripts along and think of potential topics that we should discuss—his admonition to “feed the beast” is stenciled indelibly in my brain. And he never excused himself from equal responsibility for the feeding. He regularly perused subspecialty journals looking for advances in treatment and diagnosis and through many (fortunately well-weathered) medical adventures, few of his physicians have escaped his probing question, “What’s coming that internists should know about, and who can write about it?”

We will miss his equipoise in dealing with the multiple challenges that frequently arise in the running of a monthly journal. We will miss his many skills, and his enthusiasm and commitment to the *Journal’s* success in achieving our mission. And I will miss his advice, his creativity, his balanced counsel and support, and his willingness to edit and provide honest feedback on whatever writings I sent his way.

From all of us at CCJM, thank you, Phil, for being you, and for a job very well done. Sleep late and read the newspaper.



**BRIAN F. MANDELL, MD, PhD**  
Editor in Chief

PS: Phil—Please note that although too wordy, I at least introduced the “story line” in the first sentence.